

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on April 7, 2003. Claim 7 has been amended and claims 9 and 10 stand withdrawn pursuant to a restriction requirement raised by Examiner. Claims 1-8 remain in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments, as well as the following remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in complete condition for allowance and request reconsideration of the application in this regard.

Claims 1 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the ITW web page publication. Claims 4-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ITW web page publication in view of Broome, U.S. Patent No. 3,006,382. Lastly, claims 2-3 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ITW web page publication and further in view of Broome. Applicant believes that the ITW coating system shown in the cited web page is described in ITW's European Patent Application EP 1 176 232, and Applicant's response will refer to this European Patent Application to describe the structure of the ITW coating system. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for the reasons set forth below and respectfully requests that the rejections be withdrawn.

In particular, each of independent claims 1 and 7 cites a plurality of discrete strand guide members supported in spaced apart relationship on the shaft

for guiding the strands toward the plurality of dispensing outlets with a predetermined spacing between the strands. Independent claim 4 recites a plurality of discrete strand guide elements supported by and variably positionable along the longitudinal axis of the support sleeve for guiding the strands toward the plurality of dispensing outlets with a predetermined spacing between the strands. Applicant has submitted herewith a copy of Fig. 1A which has been color-coded to show the discrete strand guide members (62) highlighted in yellow and, in one embodiment, spacer members (64) highlighted in green positioned intermediate the strand guide members for spacing the strand guide members on the shaft.

Examiner takes the position that the ITW web page publication discloses "a plurality of discrete strand guide members (E)" supported in spaced apart relationship on the "shaft (A)". However, Applicant respectfully submits that this is not what is shown in the ITW web page publication since the roller guide of the ITW web page publication (see roller guide (50) in ITW's EP 1 176 232) is a unitary wheel that is machined with spaced circumferential grooves about the surface of the roller guide to guide the strands in alignment with the dispensing outlets of the liquid dispenser. The grooves are machined into the roller guide so that the spacing of the grooves corresponds to the spacing between the dispensing outlets of the pattern die (see Column 4, lines 16-20 of ITW's EP 1 176 232).

The inherent drawback or shortcoming of unitary guide wheels, such as ITW's unitary roller guide, is fully described in the Background of Applicant's

specification. In brief summary, ITW's roller guide requires that the grooves be machined about the circumference of the roller guide with a spacing that matches a particular dispensing outlet spacing of the pattern die. As the spacing between the dispensing outlets is changed with a change in the pattern die, the ITW roller guide must be removed and replaced with a roller guide having a groove spacing that matches the particular pattern die in use.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the primary ITW web page publication fails to disclose a plurality of discrete strand guide members supported in spaced apart relationship on a shaft as claimed by Applicant in each of independent claims 1, 4 and 7, and there is no teaching in the ITW web page publication taken alone, or in combination with the other prior art of record, of Applicant's invention as claimed. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of independent claims 1, 4 and 7 be withdrawn.

Moreover, as claims 2-3, 5-6 and 8 depend from allowable independent claims 1, 4 and 7, respectively, and further as each of these claims recites a combination of elements not taught or suggested by the prior art of record, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable as well.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing response including the amendments and remarks, this application is submitted to be in complete condition for allowance and early notice to this affect is earnestly solicited. If there is any issue that remains which may be resolved by telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned in order to resolve the same and expedite the allowance of this application.

Please charge any additional surcharge or filing fee or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,

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